

REMARKS

Claims 1-8, 10, 13-16, and 27-41 are pending in the present application. Claims 2-4, 29-31, and 36-38 have been canceled. Independent claims 1, 28, and 35 have been amended to more clearly define the invention. In particular, claims 1, 28 and 35 have been amended to clarify that the telephone call is routed to a telephone terminal for the callee in response to determining that the first voice sample matches the second voice sample and the telephone call is disconnected in response to determining that the first voice sample does not match the second voice sample. Support for this amendment may be found on page 9, lines 12-22, page 14, lines 1-28, and page 18, lines 3-10. No new matter has been added. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and examination in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claim rejections 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-8, 10, 27-33 and 35-40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Morganstein et al., (U.S. Patent 6,445,775, hereinafter “Morganstein”) in view of Peterson, et al. (U.S. Patent 6,385,303, hereinafter “Peterson”). Claims 13-16, 34, and 41 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Morganstein and Peterson in view of O’Brien (U.S. Patent 5,479,489). Applicants respectfully submit that Morganstein, Peterson, and O’Brien all fail to teach, disclose, or suggest each and every feature of Applicants’ claimed invention as recited in the pending claims.

Claims 1-8, 10, 27-33 and 35-40

Claims 2-4, 29-31, and 36-38 have been canceled. The rejection of the remaining claims is respectfully traversed. Amended independent claim 1 specifies a method of screening a caller prior to establishing a telephone connection between the caller and a callee. The method includes receiving an indication from the callee of one or more callers that are authorized to be directly connected to the callee upon calling the callee, wherein the indication includes an instruction to collect voice samples of the authorized callers; receiving a telephone call from a caller; prompting the caller to speak the name of the callee; receiving the name of the callee when spoken by the caller, wherein the callee is a person and wherein the telephone call is directed to a telephone terminal for the callee for the purpose of speaking to the callee;

identifying the caller by analyzing the voice of the caller received when the caller speaks the name of the callee without asking the caller to self identify, wherein the identifying comprises the steps of: generating a first voice sample of the caller's voice when the caller speaks the name of the callee; and comparing the first voice sample to a second voice sample. The method further includes routing the telephone call to the telephone terminal for the callee in response to determining that the first voice sample matches the second voice sample; and disconnecting the telephone call in response to determining that the first voice sample does not match the second voice sample.

Morganstein discloses a computer-based system for identifying an unidentified caller includes a database containing utterance data that corresponds to a known caller. A processing system coupled to the database receives utterance information that corresponds to the unidentified caller and compares the utterance information with the utterance data to identify the unidentified caller as the known caller. In response, the processing system provides a call routing option including an accept option, a transfer option, or a disconnect option (see Col. 2, lines 1-13). Morganstein however, fails to teach, disclose, or suggest each of the features specified in amended independent claim 1. For example, Morganstein fails to disclose routing a telephone call to a telephone terminal for a callee in response to determining that a first voice sample matches a second voice sample; and disconnecting the telephone call in response to determining that the first voice sample does not match the second voice sample. In contrast, Morganstein merely discloses providing a call routing option upon identifying an unidentified caller as a known caller through an utterance comparison.

Peterson, relied upon in the Office Action to cure the deficiencies of Morganstein, discloses a telephone system and method that determine the identity of callees and/or callers associated with an incoming telephone call. A callee may be identified using voice recognition techniques. Once the callee is identified, a distinctive ring is generated to identify the callee to telephone users, prior to transferring control to a telephone control unit (see Col. 8, line 32 through Col. 11, line 20). Peterson however, like Morganstein, fails to teach, disclose, or suggest routing a telephone call to a telephone terminal for a callee in response to determining that a first voice sample matches a second voice sample; and disconnecting the telephone call in response to determining that the first voice sample does not match the second voice sample. In contrast, Peterson discloses generating a distinctive ring prior to routing a telephone call. Peterson further

fails to disclose disconnecting a telephone call in response to determining a voice sample mismatch.

Since neither Morganstein nor Peterson, alone or in combination, teach, disclose, or suggest each of the features specified in amended independent claim 1, this claim is allowable for at least the aforementioned reasons and the rejection of this claim should be withdrawn. At least because claims 5-8, 10, and 27 inherit the language of amended claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims also allowable over Morganstein in view of Peterson and that the rejection of these claims should also be withdrawn. Amended independent claims 28 and 35 also inherit the language of amended claim 1 and thus these claims are also allowable. Therefore the rejection of these claims should also be withdrawn. Claims 29-33 inherit the language of amended claim 28 and claims 36-40 inherit the language of amended claim 35. Therefore, these claims are also allowable and the rejection of these claims should also be withdrawn.

Claims 13-16, 34, and 41

Claims 13-16, 34, and 41 inherit the language of amended claims 1, 28, and 35, respectively, and thus are allowable over Morganstein in view of Peterson for at least the same reasons. O'Brien, which discloses a system permitting telephone customers to place calls by uttering an identifying phrase specific to a caller (see Col. 1, lines 35-61), fails to teach, disclose, or suggest routing a telephone call to a telephone terminal for a callee in response to determining that a first voice sample matches a second voice sample and disconnecting the telephone call in response to determining that the first voice sample does not match the second voice sample, as specified in amended claims 1, 28, and 35. Therefore, claims 13-16, 34, and 41 are also allowable over O'Brien and the rejection of these claims should be withdrawn.

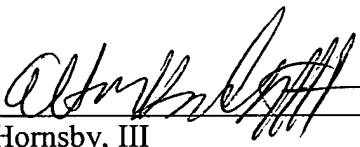
CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the Applicants respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

MERCHANT & GOULD

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